



GOVERNMENT OF GUAM



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH and SOCIAL SERVICES

DIPATTAMENTON SALUT PUPBLEKO YAN SETBISION SUSIAT

123 Chalan Kareta, Mangilao, Guam 96913-6304

CLINICAL ADVISORY

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Health officials say drug-resistant H1N1 strains may emerge with excessive use of antivirals.

"Indiscriminate use of antiviral medications to prevent and treat influenza could ease the way for drug-resistant strains of the novel H1N1 virus, or swine flu, to emerge, public health officials warn."

Dr. Anne Schuchat, director of the National Center on Immunization and Respiratory Disease at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, said it wouldn't surprise the agency to see "resistance emerges as a bigger problem in the fall or in the years ahead."

To date, "a handful of cases of Tamiflu-resistant H1N1 have been reported this summer, and there is no shortage of examples of misuse of the antiviral medications, experts say."

While antiviral drugs other than Tamiflu or Relenza exist, "the pandemic H1N1 virus is resistant to the adamantane class. If it develops resistance to Tamiflu also, only Relenza would be left to treat the illness, barring the development of new antiviral medications."

The World Health Organization recommends that Tamiflu should only be given to particularly vulnerable people. The organization specified that "healthy people who catch mild to moderate cases of swine flu don't need the drug, but the young, old, pregnant, and those with underlying health problems surely do."

CDC recommends judicious use of antiviral medications to reduce the possibilities of the development and spread of antiviral resistant influenza viruses

Use of Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) or Zanamivir (Relenza) should be focused on treatment of persons with suspected or confirmed H1N1 influenza who are 1) hospitalized or 2) at higher risk of developing complications due to influenza even if hospitalization is not required.

People at high risk of developing complications from H1N1 influenza include:

- **Children younger than 5 years of age**
- **Pregnant women**
- **People of any age with chronic medical conditions (examples: asthma, emphysema/COPD, Diabetes, heart conditions, kidney failure, neuromuscular disease etc.)**
- **Immunosuppression — HIV infection, people on immunosuppressive medication etc.**
- **People older than 65 years of age.**